

# the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

## Ring Strength

Greg Glassman

The exact time and place where rings first appeared is unknown but it is widely accepted that they evolved from a trapeze-like device that by 1816 featured loops fashioned from knotted rope.

What is more certain but poorly understood is that for nearly 150 years the men that worked the rings were in possession of an upper body strength that finds no equal in weightlifting or other calisthenics. The ringman, pound for pound, presents more upper body strength, along more lines of action, than any other athlete.

The fitness that CrossFitters demonstrate cannot be found without ring training. Gymnastics rings occupy a place in our training that only the barbell can match. Kettlebells and dumbbells, medicine balls and stretch bands, while essential to our practice, are second tier tools to the rings.

Unfortunately, introduction to the rings has traditionally been available only from involvement in sport gymnastics and then only through progressions that quickly discouraged all but those coming to the sport



*Tyler Hass demonstrates a body row*

with exceptional strength to weight ratios and gripping tenacity.

Our exhortations to buy and train with rings have been successful but the number of reported muscle-ups reflects only a percentage or two of the people claiming participation in our program.

We've long worked to reintroduce ring training to athletic strength and conditioning – they were in the gyms for longer than they've been gone – but unfamiliarity stops most people and the brutishly tough progressions thwarted the small remainder brave enough to try new things. The rings need a champion.

All great causes need great supporters. Ring training is a great cause and Tyler Hass is ring training's best champion.

Twenty-one year old gymnastics novice, Tyler Hass, friend of CrossFit and publisher of Power Athletes Magazine, has produced an instructional DVD, "Ring Strength", that stands as the best introduction to the rings for athletic strength and conditioning available anywhere, ever.

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## Ring Strength (continued...)

“Ring Strength” packaging promises “over 40 exercises in a carefully designed progression to accommodate every level of strength from beginner to advanced.” This gem of a DVD delivers as promised. You will never outgrow or tire of “Ring Strength”.

[Ringtraining.com](http://Ringtraining.com), the site offering “Ring Strength” does a great job of supporting the budding community of ring enthusiasts with a forum and a few supplemental training articles. Training rings (not competition rings) are also available from the site and are perfect tools for the job at an unbeatable \$80.

Not only do the DVD’s progressions allow access to the rings for an audience of wide abilities, but the exercise are performed by the 2003 World’s Gymnastics Championships Gold Medallist in the rings, Jordan Jovtchev. Workable ring progressions for general conditioning demonstrated by a gymnastics legend puts this DVD on our “CrossFit must have media” list.

“Ring Strength” concludes with Jordan’s gold medal performances at the World’s Championships and some unbelievable footage of some advanced ring strength work that supports the claim that Jordan Jovtchev is the strongest athlete in the world and our claim that ringmen hold the greatest upper body strength of all athletes.

The skills and drills in “Ring Strength” mesh wonderfully with our WOD (Workout of the Day). Ring training could be incorporated before, after, or instead of any workout, especially those workouts with a strong upper body component.

With training and practice many of the exercises that were once tough or impossible on the rings can be developed where they become elements in your warm-up or “rest days” goofing off. Imagine “goofing off” or warming up with a planche on the rings!



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Greg Glassman is the founder (with Lauren Glassman) of CrossFit, Inc. and CrossFit Santa Cruz and is the publisher of the CrossFit Journal. He is a former competitive gymnast and has been a fitness trainer and conditioning coach since the early 1980s.